

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2004

The Honorable Bill Young
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-218, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you prepare to consider a supplemental funding request to provide much-needed assistance to areas that have been hit hard by Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Ivan, we write to ask that you include \$600 million emergency Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding to prevent a severe, but avoidable, crisis for Americans who will face the staggering costs of home heating energies this winter.

We strongly support rapid passage of emergency assistance for areas hard-hit by natural disasters. We also urge, however, that the Congress not wait until after cold weather arrives to shore-up the LIHEAP program.

High oil prices this summer raised the price of gasoline, resulting in increased financial difficulties for some consumers. As summer turns into fall, however, Americans continue to face record prices for oil, natural gas and propane. According to the Energy Information Administration, prices for these heating fuels are expected to be dramatically more expensive than in previous years. This winter, the cost of heating a residence with oil is expected to be \$1,094 (an increase of 45% over the period 1998-2000), the cost of propane heating will be \$1,271 (a 32% increase), and the cost of natural gas heating will be \$993 (a 47% increase). Without additional federal assistance, we believe that the states' low-income heating assistance programs will run out of money well before the end of the winter.

Without additional funding, a mere 13 percent of the more than 34.6 million applicants will receive assistance. For those lucky enough to participate in LIHEAP, the program is a lifesaver. According to a survey conducted last winter, LIHEAP helped restore heat to 62 percent of those who lost it last year because they could not pay their bills. Fifty four percent of recipients would have kept their homes at an unsafe temperature without LIHEAP, and 48 percent would have had their electricity or heat shut off.

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Further, the study's findings reveal the often dangerous sacrifices that LIHEAP participants must make in order to supply their homes with energy. Seventy-eight percent reduced basic expenses for household necessities to afford their energy bill, and 30 percent used their kitchen stove for heat. During the last five years, 38 percent of LIHEAP recipients went without medical or dental care, 28 percent did not make a rent or mortgage payment and 22 percent subsisted without food for at least one day. Further, half of home heating fires and three-quarters of home heating fire deaths occur during the winter, according to the National Fire Protection Association.


We strongly supported the House's vote to add \$22 million to the LIHEAP account in Fiscal Year 2005, but we fear that this program remains chronically underfunded. We therefore respectfully request that a supplemental spending bill provide \$600 million for states to meet the coming LIHEAP funding crisis.

Thank you very much for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,


ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress

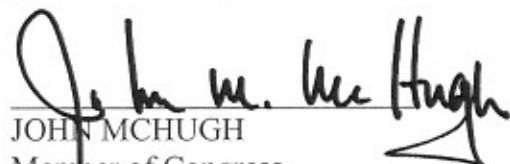

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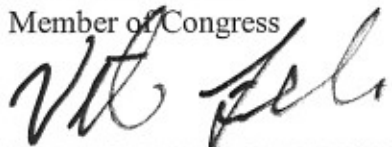

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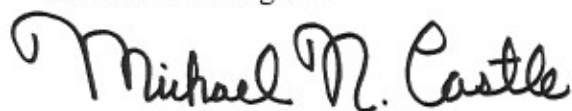

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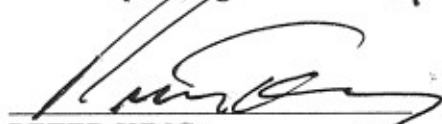
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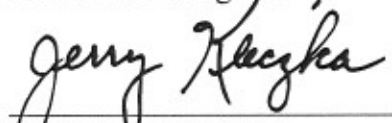
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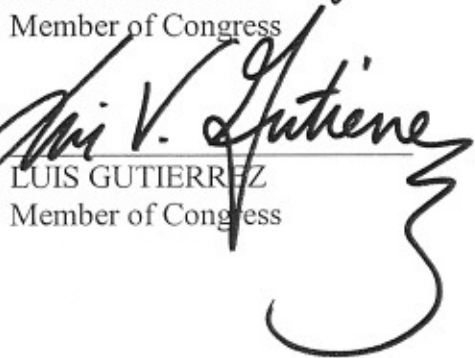
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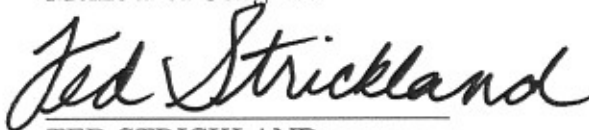
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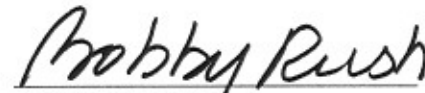
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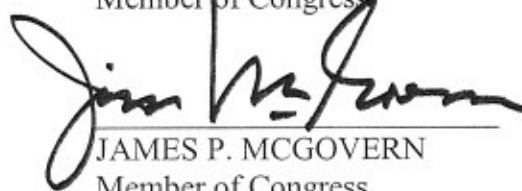
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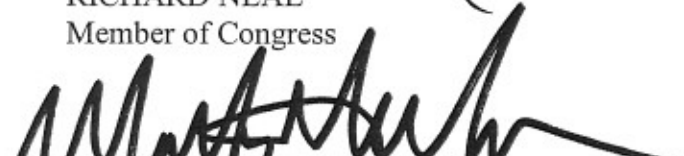


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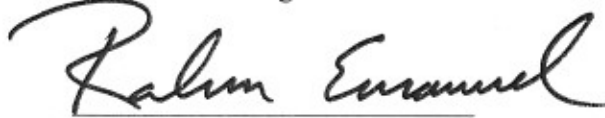

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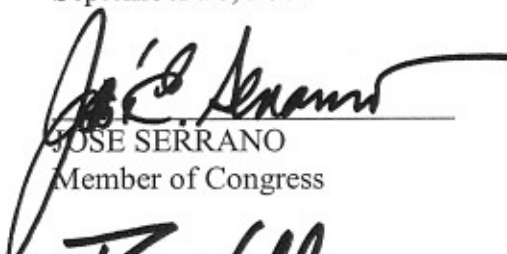

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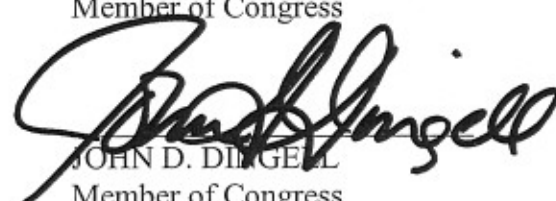
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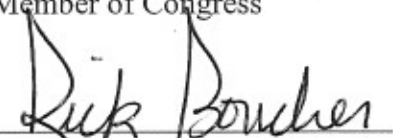
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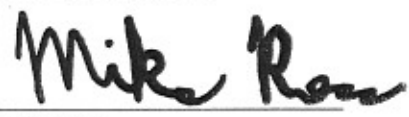
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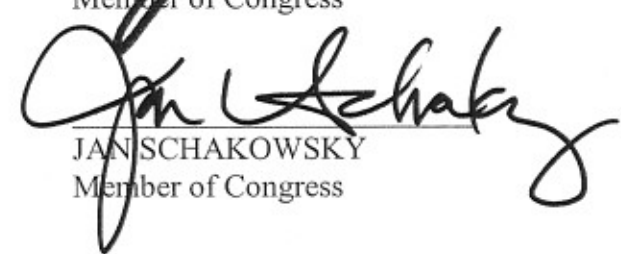
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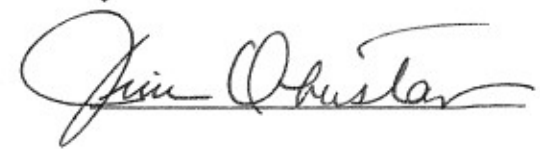
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